

# GOVAFFAIRS

## GENERAL LEGISLATIVE MATTERS



### CHANGES IN SACRAMENTO

The new session in Sacramento brings with it several changes. Senator Don Perata (D-Oakland) replaced longtime Senator John Burton as Senate Pro Tem. One of his first major moves in the position was combining the Senate Housing Committee and the Senate Transportation Committee to form a new Committee. The new Committee, the Transportation and Housing Committee will be chaired by Senator Tom Torlakson (D-Antioch).

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**For more information** about the legislative program, please contact Donald Rhodes, Manager of Public and Government Affairs at 213.236.1840 or [rhodes@scag.ca.gov](mailto:rhodes@scag.ca.gov).

### President Signs Omnibus Appropriations Bill

On December 8th, President Bush signed the Fiscal Year 2005 omnibus-spending bill (HR 4818). The \$388 billion spending package includes the transportation-treasury appropriations bill. The bill was being held by the Senate until House members adopt a resolution deleting a provision that would allow the Appropriations committees' chairmen and staff to look through income tax returns without penalty for disclosure of the confidential information. A roll call vote was held on December 6th on the resolution (H Con Res 528) to strike the provision from the omnibus bill. The bill was then enrolled and sent to the President.

Congress originally passed a FY 05 omnibus-spending package consisting of nine appropriations measures on November 20th. The omnibus bill provides \$34.7 billion for highways in FY 05, which is \$1.9 billion more than either the President's request or the amount in the FY 04 budget for highways. There was also an increase in transit funding from FY 04 levels, with transit programs receiving \$7.64 billion, including \$1.4 billion to fund new transit projects.

Under the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) section, California received 8.65% of the total, roughly \$340 million more than prior year receipts. The following are key highway projects included in the appropriations measure: \$5 million for the Golden State and Antelope Valley freeways through Santa Clarita; \$5 million for the interchange on Interstate 10 in San Bernardino and Loma Linda; \$ 1.25 million for the Interstate 10 interchange in Rialto; and \$1 million for the 101/405 interchange.

Under Transit New Starts, funding has been issued for the Los Angeles County MTA Gold Line Light Rail System project for \$60 million, the North Hollywood Metro Red Line subway extension for \$675,103, and the MTA Gold Line for \$500,000. Other projects include: \$4 million for runway improvements at San Bernardino International Airport; \$2 million for the Alameda Corridor East Intelligent Transportation System (ITS); \$1 million for the Los Angeles Union Station Communication System; and \$750,000 for the Ventura County ITS.

The bill provides \$1.217 billion for Amtrak, \$300 million over the President's budget request. Also under the Federal Rail Authority (FRA) section, the bill provides \$1 million for the California-Nevada Interstate Maglev project. A total of \$13.6 billion is provided to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), \$219 million below the fiscal year 2004 enacted level and \$335 million below the President's request.

### Joint Meetings

On November 11th, the Santa Barbara Association of Governments, the Ventura County Transportation Commission, and the Ventura Council of Governments joined SCAG in a joint meeting in Ventura. Several SCAG members, including SCAG President Ron Roberts, Supervisor Judy Mikels, Councilmember Dennis Washburn,

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## SACRAMENTO

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Also, Governor Schwarzenegger made two noteworthy appointments in November. The first was the appointment of Will Kempton as Director of Caltrans and the second was the appointment of former legislator and Congressman Tom Campbell as the Director of the Department of Finance.

## LOBBYISTS' UPDATE

### From the C2 Group

On November 20th, the final nine appropriation bills, including the Transportation/Treasury bill, totaling \$388.4 billion were passed in an omnibus appropriations package. The Transportation/Treasury bill provides a record \$34.7 billion for highways and \$7.644 billion for transit, an increase of \$440 million over the fiscal 2004 level but below the Senate high water mark of \$7.75 billion. The bill also provides for rescissions totaling \$1.353 billion from the core highway programs and an additional \$79 million from the TIFIA program to fund a series of earmarks for projects totaling \$1.2 billion.

Congress will return in early January to reorganize and then reconvene on January 20th. In the 109th Congress, the Transportation reauthorization bill will be reintroduced. It is expected that members will attempt to move the bill quickly before the May 31st expiration of the current extension.

### From Bauer Government Relations

The newly-elected Legislature convenes on Monday, December 6th, for the purpose of organizing the House. The Legislature begins work in earnest in January.

The latest budget estimates of the State's deficit range from \$6-\$8 billion. The deficit puts transportation funding at tremendous risk. Efforts are currently underway by interest groups to protect Proposition 42 funds on a permanent basis. This will be a major effort in 2005. Speaker Fabian Nunez has committed to introduce legislation on this topic in the New Year.

The passage of Proposition 1A was a remarkable local government success story. The proposition offers long-term stability for local government property tax revenue, but the short term will still be difficult. Many of you were directly involved in the passage of this initiative and deserve a hearty thank you.

We are going to continue to work on design-build legislation, as a legislative solution to this issue stalled in the waning days of the last session. Given the State's fiscal crisis, creative solutions to project delivery are necessary. In addition to design-build, we will be seeking legislative authorization to pursue private-public partnerships to build the projects needed to move goods through our region and to protect the region's air quality. There is tremendous economic potential that remains untapped in the movement of goods.

## GENERAL LEGISLATIVE MATTERS *continued*

Councilmember Carl Morehouse, and SCAG staff participated in the meeting which included a discussion of SCAG's Compass/Growth Visioning program and Santa Barbara/Ventura Interregional Partnership for Jobs/Housing Balance. Another key issue discussed was Route 101 Corridor Planning.

Prior to the Santa Barbara and Ventura County joint meeting, SCAG also participated in a joint meeting with Kern Council of Governments on October 27th. The meeting, chaired by SCAG Regional Councilmember Carl Morehouse, covered common corridors SR58, I-5, US-395 and SR-14. Other issues discussed included Freight and Global Gateways and Eastern California Planning Partnerships between KERN and SANBAG. SCAG also briefed KERN on transportation financing issues at the state and federal levels.